REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1-29 were pending in the application; rejected claims 1 and 17 under 35 USC § 102(e); and rejected claims 1-29 under 35 USC § 103(a). In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patents 6,404,743 to Meandzija and 5,987,514 to Rangarajan (References A and B, respectively) were cited. Claims 1-29 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In items 3-5 on pages 2-4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 17 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as unpatentable over Rangarajan. Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to clarify that the state information which is checked by the agent is "state information of said agent" (claim 1, line 8), i.e., information describing the state of the agent. Furthermore, "only selected state information of said agent indicating the deviations from the normal state" (claim 1, last two lines) is sent "in response to the request message" (claim 1, lines 10-11).

On the other hand, Rangarajan teaches a system having three management layers: an upper layer consisting of network manager 48 (Fig. 1), a middle layer consisting of mid-level managers 40-45 and a lowest level consisting of devices D, each connected to a mid-level manager. As described at column 5, lines 39-48, the network manager transmits event requests to the mid-level managers to obtain an attribute value characterizing the devices connected to the mid-level manager. In response, the mid-level manager directs a low-level agent, i.e., the device connected thereto, to retrieve values for the specified attribute (see column 6, lines 46-48) by polling the device during a prescribed interval (column 3, lines 32-34). The device retrieves the values from its management information base and returns the value(s) of the attribute to the mid-level manager (see column 6, lines 50-53) which determines whether the value(s) satisfy some condition and generates an event report if the condition is met (see column 6, lines 53-57).

With the changes made to the independent claims, it should now be clear that the mid-level manager in the system taught by Rangarajan does not correspond to the "agent" in claims 1 and 17. However, the low-level agent or device in the system taught by Rangarajan does not receive the request and apparently does not have the intelligence to determine whether an event report should be sent to the network manager in response to the request issued by the network manager. In addition, the separation of functions between the mid-level manager and the low-level agent results in communication differences between the operations performed by the system disclosed in Rangarajan and those recited in the claims. As discussed above, in

Rangarajan the request is received by the mid-level manager which obtains values for the specified attribute "by continuously sending SNMP commands such as GetNext to the low-level agent 12-36 at the specified intervals" (column 6, lines 48-50). One of the benefits of the present invention is that less message traffic is required by having the agent with the information receive the request. This is particularly important, since the request is issued for the purpose of "a state realignment" (claim 1, line 4) which is performed when the synchronization of state information between the manager and the agent needs to be reestablished. One of the benefits of the present invention is that this is done efficiently. On the other hand, Rangarajan is directed to "the basic monitoring function of retrieving attribute values from one or more low-level agents" (column 3, lines 43-44; see also the preamble of claim 1).

Furthermore, contrary to the assertion in the last paragraph on page 3 of the Office Action that the generation of an event report as described at column 3, lines 42-52 and column 6, lines 43-57 constitutes determining "deviations from a normal state" (claim 1, lines 8-9), nothing has been cited or found to suggest that the "condition" supplied in the request from the network manager constitutes a "normal state". By reporting "only selected state information of said agent indicating the deviations from the normal state" (claim 1, last two lines), the present invention is able to provide a further benefit in requiring less communication by relying upon a normal state that is previously known by both the agent and the manager. As a result, the manager does not have to supply the condition against which the state of the agent is compared. Instead, a simple request for a report of deviations from the normal state is sufficient to inform the manager of the state of the agent.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that claim 1 and claim 17 which recites limitations similar to those quoted above from claim 1, patentably distinguish over Rangarajan.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In items 7-26 on pages 4-10 of the Office Action, claims 2-16 and 18-29 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Rangarajan in view of Meandzija. Nothing has been cited or found in Meandzija suggesting modification of Rangarajan to perform the operations recited in the independent claims as discussed above. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 1 and 17, as well as claims 2-6 and 18-29 which depend therefrom, patentably distinguish over the combination of Rangarajan in view Meandzija for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Request for Examiner Interview

If the claim amendments and the discussion above does not result in withdrawal of all rejections relying upon Rangarajan and Meandzija, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone to arrange an Examiner Interview prior to issuing the next Office Action for the purpose of discussing what further amendments could be make to clearly distinguish the present invention over the prior art.

Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner, taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-29 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Entry of this Amendment, reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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